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CALIFORNIA BASKETRY AND THE POMO

By A. L. KROEBER

A RECENT account of the basketry of the Pomo Indians of California by Dr S. A. Barrett is perhaps the most complete study of the basketry of any North American tribe yet published.[1] It both offers opportunity to examine the relations existing between the Pomo and other tribes as regards this art, and supplements and illustrates the conclusions that can be drawn from other studies.

MATERIALS

The materials used by the Pomo in basket making number ten or twelve, but the majority of these are used rarely or for special purposes or in restricted districts. The materials whose use is at all common or of general consequence are five. Of these only one is used as warp in either twined or coiled ware. This is willow. The woof materials are four: the root of a sedge, *Carex*, the bark of the redbud, *Cercis*, the root of the bulrush, *Scirpus*, and the root of the digger-pine. Of these the sedge is the most important, furnishing, as willow does for the warp, woof of both coiled and twined baskets. The redbud furnishes red patterns and is employed chiefly in twined weaves. The bulrush root, after being dyed, provides patterns in black and is used almost entirely in coiling. Digger-pine root fibers are employed principally for the woof of coarse twined baskets.

It shows the influence of convention and habit on technique, that practically all the basketry of the Pomo is made in these five materials, although an occasional different use shows that they possess knowledge of other plants and although their habitat produces many other species which would be serviceable, as demonstrated by the employment of these in regions where different technical habits prevail. The other Indians of California evince a similar restriction, voluntary it might be called, of their choice of basket materials.

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[1] S. A. Barrett, Pomo Indian Basketry, Univ. of Cal. Publ. in Am. Arch. and Ethn., VII, pp. 133–308, pl. 14–30, Berkeley, 1908.

In northernmost California, where only twining is practised, the warp is almost universally hazel, and the woof is root-fibers of conifers, — pine, redwood, spruce, or other species being used according to local distribution. The ornamentation of this basketry consists of a glossy white overlay, which is the shining grass *Xerophyllum tenax*. For patterns in black the stems of the five-fingered fern, *Adiantum*, are used, and for patterns in red, alder-dyed fibers from the stem of a large fern, *Woodwardia*.

A description given by Dr Dixon[1] of the materials used by the northern Maidu also shows characteristic limitation. The northern Maidu make large carrying baskets in the twined technique of northern California, and use for this purpose the same materials. The great bulk of their basketry is coiled, and only two principal materials, willow and redbud, are used. Both of these are employed for both foundation and wrapping. The outer bark of the redbud gives red patterns.

Among the Cahuilla, Luiseño, and Diegueño of southern California the ordinary materials are only three. For the foundation a grass, *Epicampes rigens*, is used. The wrapping consists of either a reed, *Juncus*, or of sumach, *Rhus*. Twined basketry, which is subsidiary, is made entirely of reed.

Information from other tribes is incomplete, but as there is nowhere any indication of a greater variety of materials used, it appears that the specialization followed by the Pomo is the rule and not exceptional.

TECHNIQUES

In the matter of weaves it appears that the Pomo are anomalous in California in practising an unusual variety of technical processes. The total number of distinct processes is perhaps not greater among the Pomo, but whereas other tribes employ regularly and frequently only one or two of the techniques with which they are acquainted, the Pomo practise five processes abundantly and often make baskets of one kind in several weaves.

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[1] R. B. Dixon, The Northern Maidu, Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., XVIII, 145, New York, 1905.

The California Indians belong to two groups according as they follow twining or coiling processes of making baskets.[1] There are very few tribes that use both types of technique. The narrow limitation in the employment of materials is therefore paralleled by a limitation of technical processes.

All the Indians of northernmost California, the Tolowa, Yurok, Karok, Hupa, Wiyot, the Athabascan tribes of the middle drainage of Eel river, the Shasta, Northern Wintun, Achomawi, Atsugewi, and Modoc, make only twined work. Generally speaking all tribes to the south of these may be characterized as makers of coiled basketry. There is however a distinction. While the tribes using twining know nothing of coiling, the tribes that employ coiling also twine to some extent. This difference is inherent in the nature of the two processes. The coiled basket is stiffer, closer, and requires much more labor. It lends itself with difficulty to the construction of openwork textiles, such as are desirable or necessary for many purposes. A fish-trap in coiled basketry is practically impossible. A conical carrying-basket can be made as well in coiling as in twining; but such a basket being intended for fire-wood and similar loads, an openwork construction is in every way as serviceable as a close coiled one, besides being much lighter and readily made in one tenth the time. Even among tribes inclined toward coiling, twining is therefore employed for many implements of household usage and for those in which either an open or a ready construction is desired. Carrying-baskets, weirs and traps, seed-beaters, winnowers, and baby-carriers are usually twined by tribes whose more characteristic basketry, such as vessels for water, food, storage, and cooking, is coiled. In short, twined weaves are adequate for most forms and purposes, so that tribes whose cultural circumstances have led them to lean toward twining usually employ no other process. Coiling is not applicable to all purposes, and tribes with a specific bent toward this technique are therefore compelled to use also twining, or other processes, for certain implements.

The tribes of whom coiling is characteristic held all of southern and central and part of northern California, much the larger part of the state. The line of separation from the northern region of twining is as follows: In the east it is the boundary between the Maidu and the Achomawi and Atsugewi of the Pit river valley. The Yana employed both processes, their twined ware being of the northern type, their coiling resembling that of the Maidu, but with greater coarseness and crudeness. The majority of Yana baskets that have been collected, and the best made, are twined, so that this is likely to be the typical and best accultured Yana technique. The northernmost Wintun twine, the southern Wintun coil, but the boundary is not precisely known. In the Coast Range the line of division separates the Yuki, who are distinctly a coiling tribe, from the Wailaki. The Wailaki make a crude form of the typical basketry of northern California. Occasional coiled pieces of Yuki character occur among them, but are in great minority and clearly due to Yuki influence.

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[1] In those parts of America where plaiting and twilling are followed at all extensively, they appear to tend to supplant twining or coiling, rather than to exist beside them.

It is of particular interest that the Pomo, who fall well within the limits of the southern group, hold the two techniques in balance. They cannot be included among the border tribes subject to two influences, for to the north of them are the Yuki, who are as clearly a coiling tribe as any. The twined basketry of the Pomo is also entirely different from the twined basketry of northern California. It must therefore be set down as an independent development, which has flourished side by side with the development among the same people of coiled techniques, without either process greatly influencing the other.

According to Dr Barrett, the coiled basketry of the Pomo is about equally divided between one-rod and three-rod foundations. Single-rod foundations are rare in California, being otherwise found only among the Miwok and Washo. A few pieces have also been obtained among the Yokuts and Shoshoneans adjacent to the Miwok. The Maidu, most commonly the Miwok and Washo, and probably the Wintun where uninfluenced by the Pomo, employ three-rod foundations. The Yokuts and the tribes of Southern California use a multiple foundation. The Yuki use a rod and welt foundation. Neither the rod and welt nor a multiple foundation ordinarily occur among the Pomo.

Five twined weaves are practised by the Pomo: plain twining, diagonal twining, lattice twining, three-strand twining, and three-strand braiding. The two three-strand weaves are not used to make entire baskets, except occasionally in openwork. The characteristic twined weaves therefore are the plain, diagonal, and lattice. Of these plain twining is most frequent, but the two other processes are by no means rare, and, especially in well-finished baskets, dispute the palm with the simpler technique. Lattice twining — which is almost a combination of coiling and twining — seems to be confined entirely to the Pomo, if we except one or two small adjacent groups, such as the Huchnom, of unrelated linguistic origin but of Pomo culture. Diagonal twining, which is a characteristic Shoshonean process, is of secondary importance in California outside of the Pomo. A sporadic Yurok basket made entirely in this weave has been described.[1] The University of California museum contains also one or more pieces each from the Wiyot, Athabascans of southern Humboldt county, Yana, Chumash, and Mohave, though the normal weave of all these tribes, except possibly the last, is simple twining. The Chemehuevi, who are Shoshoneans, make caps and carrying baskets; and the Shoshonean Mono, with their neighbors the Miwok, Yokuts, and probably Washo, make many or most of their winnowers, beaters, carriers, and cradles in openwork and half-openwork diagonal twining. Among all these tribes, however, diagonal twining is not employed for ordinary baskets as by the Pomo. The Pomo have developed a distinctive type of pattern for their diagonal-twined baskets, which in its general diagonal arrangement differs from the usually horizontal arrangement on plain-twined baskets.[2]

The plain-twined Pomo basket differs radically from the twined basket of northern California. It is either nearly flat or quite deep. The typical basket of northwestern California, while its walls are vertical, is comparatively shallow. The Pomo never use the overlaying which is the sole means of producing patterns in northern California. Pomo designs are normally in redbud. Designs in northern California are in white on a neutral background, or in black or red or both on a background of overlaid white. The texture of the two wares is thoroughly different. The distinction is apparent even in details, such as that the northern people trim their warp ends off flush with the upper course of woof twining, whereas the Pomo habitually allow them to project evenly for a short distance. On the whole Pomo twining is firmer and more closely set than that practised in northern California, a difference which may perhaps be ascribed to the experience which every Pomo woman has in the necessarily close technique of coiling.

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[1] Univ. Calif. Publ. in Am. Arch. Ethn., II, 110, pl. 17, fig. 2, 1905.

[2] Barrett, op. cit., pl. 16, 17, 22.

As illustrating the Pomo balance between different weaves, and the apparent desire to maintain one beside the other instead of permitting one process to develop to the exclusion of others, it appears that conical carrying baskets are made both in plain twining and in diagonal twining; storage baskets in plain twining, lattice twining, and diagonal twining; various baskets of the same shape and use in both one-rod and three-rod coiling; and cooking baskets and flat baskets in plain twining, diagonal twining, and lattice twining.

Dr Barrett describes also Pomo wickerwork. The use of this is confined to handled seed-beaters of circular form. Wickerwork is comparatively rare in North America, though there are well-known forms in the Southwest. A wickerwork seed-beater from the northwestern Maidu is described by Dr Dixon.[1] This piece is from Butte county, in the original habitat of the Maidu. A number of Maidu from this region have long lived on Round Valley reservation, in close association with Pomo of the northern and eastern dialectic divisions, and some of these Maidu have returned to their old home. It is therefore possible that the specimen in question is due to modern Pomo influence even though collected on Maidu soil. If, however, as seems more likely, it is an old Maidu type, the practical identity of the Maidu and Pomo wickerwork forms makes it highly probable that the Wintun in the intervening territory also employed this technique in the seed-beater. In that case wickerwork would have a wider distribution in California than heretofore believed. The Mohave and Diegueño use soft-warped stiff-woofed wickerwork in the hoods of cradles.

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[1] Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., XVII, 188, fig. 47a, 1905.

DIRECTION OF PROGRESS IN MANUFACTURE

In twined Pomo baskets the general course of the woof turns from right to left, as one looks at the basket from above. Dr Barrett's explanation is illumining. In twining, the long projecting warp rods at the top render it necessary for the weaver to hold the bottom of the basket toward her. The left hand firmly grasps the warp and keeps in place the just inserted woof-strands, while the right hand manipulates the twining of the pliable woof. The progression is therefore to the weaver's right, which corresponds to the left as one looks into the basket.

The same direction of the twining woof is followed practically all over California, as by the Yurok, Karok, Hupa, Tolowa, Wiyot, Wailaki, Modoc, Wintun, Yana, Achomawi, Yuki, Wappo, Miwok, Yokuts, Mono, Chemehuevi, Chumash, Cahuilla, and Luiseño. The only exceptions found are the rude openwork Diegueño baskets, which twine in the opposite direction from the identical Cahuilla and Luiseño pieces; the close-woven flat baskets of the Yurok-Hupa territory; part of the baskets of this type made by the Modoc; and certain flat coarse openwork baskets of the Wappo. It is evident that if a basket is held reversed while in manufacture, with the bottom up or turned away from the weaver, the course of the twining when it is finished will be the reverse of the usual while the process of manipulation remains the same. The flatter the basket, the less difference does it make, in working on it, which side is held above, and the less reason is there, when it is finished, to regard one surface as specifically the inner one. In fact an essentially flat basket with a certain amount of curvature can be held and worked like others, and when finished turned inside out by a thrust in the middle. This is actually done by the Yurok. With the exception of a few unexplained Diegueño pieces, the twining of California therefore always turns from right to left, as one looks into the basket, or progresses from the maker's left to right, and contrary cases are only nominally or apparently such.

Outside of California, the direction of twining seems to be usually the same, as among the Apache and in the Puget Sound region. The baskets of the Alaska Eskimo, the majority from the Aleutian islands, and a minority among the Haida and Tlingit, however turn abnormally or clockwise. A number of baskets from the Haida-Tlingit area turn one way on their flat bottom, and in the opposite direction on their sides. It is interesting to note that Aleut baskets are described as habitually, and Haida baskets sometimes, suspended bottom up in manufacture; so that the abnormal or reverse direction of twining in this northern region seems to be the result merely of a reversed position of the basket, the weaver following the usual manipulation in her work. It follows that Dr Barrett's explanation of the direction of twining is to be accepted as of general application. It also follows that the absolute uniformity of this direction among most tribes argues for a very rare or weak natural development of left-handedness, or its almost total suppression by right-handed custom. No apparatus being required in weaving, and the product being identical whatever the direction of the twining, there is every inducement for a left-handed woman to work as is natural to her. It seems as if tribal habit or blind imitation influenced the Indian basket-maker as much and as unreasonably as it influences us in writing, sewing, riding, and shooting.

The direction of Pomo coiling is the reverse of that obtaining in twining. Dr Barrett explains this fact as also due to the process of manipulation, the left hand being engaged in holding the loose end of the warp, toward which the right advances the woof. His suggestion as to the reason for the direction of coiling is however perhaps less compelling, since the nature and position of the single projecting warp are such as to allow the worker more readily to hold the bottom of the basket either toward her or away from her. The former is perhaps the more natural position, especially in baskets approaching a spherical shape, and the corresponding direction of the coil is the prevalent one in California.[1] Nevertheless nearly all tribes except the Pomo coil at least some ware in the opposite direction, and in some regions outside of California this opposite direction is the rule. The position of the basket while in manufacture is probably the sole cause of the difference in coil-direction; yet it is evident that if such is the case mere industrial habit or tribal invention must largely determine this position, since with the Maidu and Miwok only flat baskets, with the tribes of central and southern California only spherical or constricted baskets, with the Yuki all baskets of whatever shape, and with the Pomo no baskets, progress contra-clockwise.

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[1] Univ. Calif. Publ. in Am. Arch. Ethn., VIII, 50, 1908.

DECORATION

The general scheme of pattern arrangement followed in Pomo baskets seems to depend in the main on the weave employed. In twined baskets a horizontal or banded arrangement is by far the most common, while a diagonal arrangement occurs in a minority. Dr Barrett estimates the average frequency of horizontal, parallel diagonal, and crossing diagonal arrangement at 70, 25, and 5 percent. As has been said, the horizontal arrangement occurs usually in plain twining and lattice twining, while the diagonal arrangement is characteristic of the diagonal-twined weave.

In coiled baskets there is a much greater variety of arrangement. Dr Barrett gives the following proportions: horizontal, 40; parallel diagonal, 30; crossing diagonal, 10; vertical, 15; individual or separate groups of patterns, 5. It is apparent that these proportions are not at all related to those obtaining in twined basketry. Considering the parallel diagonal and crossing diagonal arrangements as fundamentally the same, it may be said that diagonal and horizontal dispositions of designs are of about equal frequency in Pomo coiling, and that a vertical or individual arrangement, while less common than either, is also characteristic.

The typical Maidu pattern-arrangement is diagonal, either parallel, crossing, or zigzag. In southern and central California the prevailing arrangement is horizontal, a secondary one vertical, a diagonal arrangement of any sort being uncommon. As these are regions of coiling, it appears that pattern-arrangement is not altogether dependent on technical motives. The shape of ware is undoubtedly a potent factor. In the case of twining this is evident. In northwestern California, where baskets are mostly low, a diagonal arrangement would not be effective, and a horizontal arrangement prevails; in northeastern California, where technique and materials are the same, baskets are normally higher, and a diagonal disposition is customary.[1] Nevertheless there are many instances where the arrangement of patterns is clearly the outcome of neither technique nor shape, but of esthetic convention.

As regards the Pomo, it is almost certain that independently of technical influences and of the factor of decorative area as determined by shape of the basket, a greater variety of pattern arrangements is found than with other tribes.

In several other respects Pomo basketry shows specialization. According to Dr Barrett the Pomo were in aboriginal days the only California people to attempt the complete ornamentation of baskets with feathers. Feather decoration is found as far south as the Yokuts, but the feathers occur only on part of the surface of the basket. Some of the tribes immediately adjacent to the Pomo, such as the Wappo, Yuki, southern Wintun, and coast Miwok, used feathers, but never covered entire baskets. Owing to trade demands they have now in some cases learned to do so, but their work is still inferior to that of the Pomo.

The Pomo are perhaps also unique in never completely encircling a basket with a design. If the pattern is a horizontal band, a break called dau, ham, or hwa must be left in it. If this is not done it is believed that the maker will be afflicted with blindness. This break in the encircling pattern is familiar from the Southwest, but has not been reported from any other California tribes, many of whom, such as the Hupa, Yurok, Yokuts, and Cahuilla, frequently employ continuous and uniform bands of design. Most flat Yuki baskets with a pattern of simple encircling bands, but usually no others, show a break in the design, but its significance has not been reported, and it does not seem to have been the same as that of the dau.

A peculiar practice of the Pomo is also to insert in a coiled basket a few wrappings of the orange-colored quills of the yellowhammer, as a preventive charm, in all cases in which a woman works on a basket during her menstrual period.

Finally may be mentioned the shaiyoi or initial design, the introduction of which is also connected with religious beliefs.

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[1] In northwestern California also, storage baskets and other tall forms frequently show diagonal and even vertical pattern arrangements.

So far as known, the Pomo and the adjacent tribes of the same culture are the only ones among whom any basketry is made by men. Men make fish traps and weirs, baby-carriers, coarse openwork baskets for carrying and storage, and shallow openwork forms. In general most openwork is made by men. Dr Barrett notes that all close-woven baskets are made with a downward turn of the woof-strands, and most openwork baskets are made with an upward turn. As the men make no close-woven baskets, and the women few in openwork, it may be said in general terms that the men employ one direction and the women another in turning the woof in twining.

NAMES OF DESIGNS

In the matter of interpretations of names attached to designs, Dr Barrett's work is particularly full. He obtained explanations of more than eight hundred designs, appearing on some three hundred baskets. As most of these patterns were explained by a number of informants, the total number of interpretations was several thousand. Such a mass of information on this phase of basketry has probably never before been gathered among one group of people, so that the conclusions become of unusual significance. If anyone still cherishes the belief that patterns were put upon baskets by the California Indians from religious or symbolic motives, or that their significance is ceremonial or poetical, the idea will be dispelled by a glance at Dr Barrett's data, in which the thousands of monotonously commonplace and concordant names are unbroken by even a single instance of symbolic interpretation.

Among Pomo speaking three different dialects or languages, Dr Barrett encountered 54 different names of designs. Omitting 2 that are doubtful and 6 that are representations of objects introduced by Europeans, there remain 46. Ten of these are pairs, *deer-back*, for instance, being the name in one dialect of a design which in another dialect is called *wild-potato-forehead*. Of the 46 undoubted aboriginal design names only 33 occur in the northern dialect, 24 in the central, and 22 in the eastern. Twenty of the 46 names are however rare. Of the 26 in common use, 20 are found in the northern dialect, 17 in the central, and 14 in the eastern. The number of common elementary design names among any one group of Pomo people is therefore about 15 to 20.

This result agrees with determinations made among other tribes of California. Among the Yurok there are only about 18 names in customary use, though the addition of designations that are rarely employed brings the total to about 30. These rare names are perhaps in part individual interpretations, in part survivals of obsolete names, and in part introductions of terms which belong to neighboring tribes and have not yet taken firm root. Among the Hupa and Karok the number of names appears to be about the same. The total of design names, common and rare, found among the three northwestern tribes, is about 45, or practically identical with Dr Barrett's total for the three Pomo groups. The Yurok, Karok, and Hupa speak languages that are entirely unrelated, but their territory is more restricted than that of the three Pomo divisions, and their culture is at least as uniform. Conditions are therefore comparable.

Dr Dixon encountered about 40 different design names among the Maidu, who belong to three divisions which are linguistically about as divergent as the three Pomo groups. Their territory is more extensive and their environment and culture at least as diverse. Dr Dixon's total therefore also agrees well with Dr Barrett's. It seems probable that if only the design names in ordinary use among one division of the Maidu had been listed by him, the number would have fallen between 15 and 20.

Dr Barrett classifies the 26 common names of Pomo design elements as follows: names of animals and parts of the body, 12; plants, 2; inanimate objects, natural and artificial, 4; geometrical, 4; miscellaneous, 4. It should be observed that in many cases names of animals and parts of the body are combined. *Deer-back*, *turtle-neck*, and *quail-plume* occur, but neither *deer*, *turtle*, and *quail*, nor *back*, *neck*, and *feather* alone are found. This is in accord with the non-realistic and unsymbolic interpretation of the designs. Apparently names suggested by the designs have been applied to them. If there had been an original attempt at representation it is almost certain that deer, birds, turtles, horns, or feathers would have been shown and so named. No one, civilized or uncivilized, could have any motive for picturing the back of a deer or the neck of a turtle.

The relative frequency of these classes of names is about the same among the Pomo as among other California tribes. Almost everywhere names denoting animals or parts of the body are most numerous. The principal divergence occurs in northwestern California, where spatial and dynamical ideas, corresponding to Dr Barrett's geometrical names, are relatively more frequent, and among the Maidu, where names derived from plants are most numerous after names of animals and body parts.[1] Spatial or geometrical terms, such as *zigzag*, *striped*, and *spotted*, occur among all tribes, and are often of frequent usage. That they are not proportionately as numerous with the Pomo as among the northwestern Indians, is probably due to the fact that by the Pomo most conceptions of space and position are expressed by qualifying additions to the elementary design names.

Characteristic animal design names among the Pomo are *deer-back*, *deer-teeth*, *turtle-neck*, *turtle-back*, *goose-excrement*, *grasshopper-elbow*, *killdeer-eyebrow*, *quail-plume*, *crow-foot*, *bear-foot*, *bat-wing*, and *sunfish-rib*. Names of animals not connected with parts of the body are much less numerous and describe only small animals: *ant*, *butterfly*, *mosquito*, *starfish*, *water-snake*. Characteristic geometrical terms are *zigzag* or *crooked*, *wavy*, *spotted*, *dot*, *small figures*, *little pieces*. Typical names of objects are *arrowhead*, *string*, *stretcher*, and *tattoo*.

In usage, however, such names of designs are rarely employed alone. They are almost always combined with a descriptive or qualifying term, such as *barbed*, *pointed*, *short*, *round*, *large*, *downward*, *bulging*, *blank*, *white*, *half*, *both*, *single*, *imperfect*, *resembling*. These qualifying terms are nearly as numerous as the elemental design names. Dr Barrett classifies them according as they relate to form, direction, position, size, color, number, and quality.

The design name of the Pomo, whether qualified or used alone, however describes only the unit or element of a pattern. It is a simple figure of a certain shape. The pattern may consist of a repetition of this element, or of combinations of two or more elements. The pattern and the design element must be sharply distinguished.[2]

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[1] Univ. Calif. Publ. in Am. Arch. Ethn., IV, 154, 1905.

[2] For the distinction between pattern andde sign element, with particular reference to their names, among the tribes of northern California, see Univ. Calif. Publ. in Am. Arch. Ethn., IV, 155, 1905.

In exact usage the Pomo always distinguish them. The names that have been discussed designate elements. Pattern names are almost always longer and more complex. This is not only because of the qualifiers of names of design elements, but because in many cases the interrelation of several elements in a pattern is made clear. There is therefore a third class of terms which may be described as qualifiers of pattern names. Of these Dr Barrett has found 44, though a number of these occur in only one or two dialects of the three examined. Among the most common are: *crossing*, *meeting*, *collected*, *on both sides*, *connected*, *close in a row*, *and*, *near*, *on*, *among*, *along*, *in the middle*, *tied*, *scattered*, *separated*, *leading*, *following*.

The typical pattern name among the Pomo is therefore quite complex, and at the same time exactly descriptive of the pattern to anyone acquainted with the significance of the names of design elements, qualifiers of design elements, and qualifiers of patterns. Typical names are:

Arrowheads in-the-middle zigzag stripe.
Design empty in-the-middle ants close-in-a-row.
Deer-back arrowhead crossing.
Arrowhead-slender band.
Water-snake and arrowhead-barbed.
Ants arrowhead crossing in-the-middle.
Spotted in-the-middle string stripe.
Wild-potato-forehead on-both-sides arrowhead.

It is evident that, allowing for convention in the use of the terms designating elements and their relations, these pattern names are sufficient to convey an accurate description of any pattern. A Pomo woman fairly conversant with the art of basket making, and who like every member of her tribe sees baskets in daily use in every household, could make or duplicate any native pattern described to her. Such a practical purpose, and not any religious or symbolic motive, and not even to any considerable degree an artistic impulse, seems to be at the base of these design and pattern names. In other words they are conventional names of conventional figures, corresponding to our diamond, horseshoe, cross, star, crescent, fleur-de-lys, meander, and egg-and-dart. If there is a difference between the Pomo and ourselves, it is that among the

Pomo, so far as can be observed, these conventional figures give no evidence of having or of ever having had a symbolic significance. Among ourselves heraldry and religion have in some cases read deep significance into simple figures, and in other instances have given to symbols a popularity which in turn has led to their being employed for purely decorative purposes. It is however to be observed that the designations even of conventional symbolic figures are not symbolic but descriptive. The fleur-de-lys is named for the flower, not after the dynasty of which it is the emblem. The horseshoe itself, not the good luck which it typifies, gives name to the figure. The Pomo in their basket decoration are less inclined to symbolic or religious interpretation than we are in the ornamentation of our architecture, implements for household use or display, and dress. But in both cases there is no evidence that any decorative figure originated directly from a creative symbolic impulse. Symbolism can only interpret what is already given.

The development of subsidiary qualifying terms was probably carried farther by the Pomo than by other California Indians. It is not possible to speak with certainty on this point, no inquiries even approximately as extended as those of Dr Barrett having been made elsewhere. To a casual inquirer Pomo women give only the name of the most conspicuous element in a pattern, and in comparison with Dr Barrett's painstaking effort inquiries among other tribes have been casual. It is not unlikely that an equally thorough investigation elsewhere would reveal something of the same system of descriptive adjuncts as among the Pomo. At least some approaches are found in northwestern California, where several subsidiary qualifying terms have been recorded, such as Yurok, Karok, and Hupa *small-in-the-middle*, *large sharp-teeth*, *sitting-in-the-middle*, *sharp different*, *together*, *it-encircles*, *tataktak ascending*, *snake-noses on-top-of-each-other*, *they come together*, *worm goes-round*, *one-on-the-other-its-scratches*.[1] It is however in any case likely that descriptive qualifiers are more developed among the Pomo than among other tribes because Pomo patterns are in the main more complex.

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[1] Univ. of Calif. Publ. in Am. Arch. Ethn., II, 126, 127, 133, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 1905.

General Conclusions

All in all it appears from Dr Barrett's careful study that the basketry of the Pomo is unique in many aspects. It shows no connection with the basketry of northernmost California and Oregon. It possesses very little relation with the basketry of the Yuki immediately to the north. It is quite different from the basketry of the Maidu to the east. Nor does it show any direct contact with the industries of the tribes of central and southern California. The Pomo are the only California people among whom the arts of twining and coiling basketry are approximately in balance. They are nearly the only people among whom different forms either of coiling or of twining are employed side by side for similar or even identical purposes and with about equal frequency. They regularly and abundantly practise a greater number of radically distinct technical processes of basket-making than any other tribe. They are the only people in the state among whom men have a share in the making of baskets, among whom the symbolic break in the design and symbolic insertion of yellow-hammer feathers were practised, or the symbolic initial design was used. They carried the art of ornamenting baskets with shell beads and feathers to a much higher perfection than any other group. They were either alone in using wickerwork, or shared the technique with but a few tribes. Their general disposition of patterns on the surface of baskets displays a greater variety than is found elsewhere, both in respect to the relation of such arrangement to technical processes and irrespective of it. They show a wealth of subsidiary terms descriptive of the form, position, and relation of design elements and their combination in patterns, to which but scant parallels have as yet been found elsewhere, and which it is unlikely any other California people possess in the same degree. In short, it is evident that the art of basketry in all its phases underwent an independent, special, and uncommon development among the Pomo, which is displayed in an unusual wealth and variety of industrial, technical, and artistic functions.

On the other hand it appears that certain traits are common to the art of basketry among all the tribes of California. Among the most conspicuous of these features are the use of only a small proportion of available materials ; a selective specialization in certain types of technique to the exclusion of others ; a system of ornamental pattern arrangement determined by esthetic convention or artistic history as well as by technique and shape of the decorative field ; a close restriction of the number of names for pattern elements ; and a complete absence of religious or symbolic significance from the decorative designs. The conclusion which these facts perhaps most impress, is the tremendous predominance of unmotived custom and habit over conscious utilitarian, artistic, or religious purpose.

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